We Claim:

1. A photographic bleaching composition that has a pH of from about 2 to about 9 when in aqueous form, and comprising:

at least 0.01 mol/l of a ferric-ligand bleaching agent,

at least 0.01 mol/l of a rehalogenating agent, and

at least 0.01 mol/l of a phthalic acid or a salt thereof.

2. The bleaching composition of claim 1 that is in aqueous form and has a pH of from about 3.5 to about 7.

3. The bleaching composition of claim 1 comprising phthalic acid, sodium hydrogen phthalate, potassium hydrogen phthalate, ammonium hydrogen phthalate, lithium hydrogen phthalate, sodium phthalate, and potassium phthalate, or mixtures of two or more of these compounds.

4. The bleaching composition of claim 3 comprising sodium hydrogen phthalate or potassium hydrogen phthalate.

5. The bleaching composition of claim 1 wherein said ferric-ligand bleaching agent is present in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 2 mol/l.

6. The bleaching composition of claim 1 wherein said phthalic acid or a salt thereof is present in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 1 mol/l.

7. The bleaching composition of claim 1 wherein said ferric-ligand bleaching agent is present in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 2 mol/l and said phthalic acid or a salt thereof is present in an amount of from about 0.01 to about 1 mol/l.

8. The bleaching composition of claim 1 further comprising succinic acid or an imidazole.

9. The bleaching composition wherein said ferric-ligand complex is an iron complex of an aminopolycarboxylic acid or a polyaminopolycarboxylic acid.

10. The bleaching composition of claim 9 wherein said ferric-ligand complex is biodegradable.

11. The bleaching composition of claim 1 wherein said ferric-ligand complex is an iron complex of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, ethylenediaminedisuccinic acid, or 1,3-propylenediaminetetraacetic acid.

12. An aqueous bleaching composition having a pH of from about 3.5 to about 7 and comprising:

from about 0.01 to about 2 mol/l of a ferric-ligand complex bleaching agent,

from about 0.01 to about 1 mol/l of bromide ion, and

from about 0.01 to about 1 mol/l of sodium hydrogen phthalate, potassium hydrogen phthalate, or a mixture thereof.

13. A method for providing a color photographic image comprising contacting a color developed color photographic silver halide material with a photographic bleaching composition that has a pH of from about 2 to about 9 when in aqueous form and comprises:

at least 0.01 mol/l of a ferric-ligand bleaching agent,

at least 0.01 mol/l of a rehalogenating agent, and

at least 0.01 mol/l of a phthalic acid or a salt thereof.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising fixing said color developed color photographic silver halide material.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said color photographic silver halide material is a color photographic paper.

16. A method for providing a color photographic image comprising:

A) color developing an imagewise exposed color photographic silver halide material using a color developing composition,

B) contacting said color photographic silver halide material with an acidic stop solution comprising at least 0.01 mol/l of a phthalic acid or a salt thereof,

C) bleaching said color photographic silver halide material with a photographic bleaching composition having a pH of from about 2 to about 9 when in aqueous form and comprising:

at least 0.01 mol/l of a ferric-ligand bleaching agent,

at least 0.01 mol/l of a rehalogenating agent, and

at least 0.01 mol/l of a phthalic acid or a salt thereof.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising fixing said bleached color photographic silver halide material.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein said color photographic silver halide material is a color photographic paper.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein said ferric-ligand complex is an iron complex of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, ethylenediaminedisuccinic acid, or 1,3-propylenediaminetetraacetic acid.